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ABSTRACT

Although overall crime rates in Texas are decreasing, violent crime rates among juveniles in the state are on the rise. This document describes the scope of the school violence problem in Texas based on available data. It describes current national and Texas policy initiatives and programs related to school safety and violence prevention. Information on trends in national and state crime rates is provided for the following areas: violent crimes; school violence; sexual harassment; and educators' perceptions of the problem. This report also presents data on weapons arrests in Texas, summarizes Texas House and Senate bills that facilitate collaboration and information sharing, describes school districts' responses to school violence and campus security measures, and provides information on the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (DFSCA). Major themes that have emerged as a result of state-level efforts include the following: (1) the importance of forming partnerships and sharing information among schools, law enforcement, and juvenile probation agencies; (2) the need for accurate record keeping and reporting of misconduct at school; (3) the importance of establishing alternative education programs for those students who cannot be successful in the regular school environment; (4) the importance of establishing a system for recognizing schools with effective safety and violence prevention programs; and (5) the need for staff development. Six charts are included. Contains 53 references. (LMI)

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Policy Research

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Safe Texas Schools: Policy Initiatives and Programs

While overall crime rates in Texas are decreasing, violent crime rates among juveniles are on the increase. Surveys conducted nationally and in Texas show a strong perception by educators that crime in schools is increasing. Teachers perceive greater crime problems than do principals. Administrators are also more likely to perceive crime to be increasing in schools outside of their own district.

Federal safe schools initiatives have been proposed, which, if approved, would funnel millions of dollars into schools with high crime rates to help achieve America 2000 national education goal six, which states that by the year 2000 every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning. Texas initiatives by the State Board of Education and the commissioner of education, the Office of the Attorney General, and the Office of the Governor have also been underway, and recent legislation has resulted in the establishment of special committees on school safety and violence prevention.

Several major themes have emerged as a result of state-level efforts, including the importance of forming partnerships and sharing information among schools, law enforcement, and juvenile probation agencies; the need for accurate record keeping and reporting of misconduct at school, particularly criminal misconduct; the need for establishing alternative education programs for those students who are not successful in the regular school environment; the importance of establishing a system to recognize schools with effective safety and violence prevention programs and for widely disseminating that information; and the need for staff development to better prepare teachers to handle situations that arise in their schools and classrooms.

While there may be many schools in Texas with exemplary programs for school safety and violence prevention, 11 were recognized through the National Safe and Drug-Free Schools Recognition Program for 1992-93. These programs offered comprehensive approaches for reducing violence that incorporated multiple strategies focusing on prevention efforts.

Report Number 3, April 1994

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Safe Texas Schools: Policy Initiatives and Programs

School safety and violence prevention in and around schools are serious concerns. Yet, defining the scope of the problem and the extent to which effective programs are available to respond to the problem has been difficult for a number of reasons. First, comprehensive and uniform information about school violence is just becoming available. Consequently, research on school violence has been based on secondary sources that collect information for different purposes using different definitions.

The Uniform Crime Reporting system, for example, uses a very narrow definition of criminal behaviors. It covers only activities that are criminal offenses under state or federal law, but includes nonviolent property crimes such as theft. On the other hand, the Texas Education Agency uses a broad definition of misbehaviors of immediate concern to teachers in its evaluation of projects funded under the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act. It focuses on drug use but includes activities such as smoking cigarettes, primarily a health concern. Either definition can be useful, but they paint very different pictures of school safety and violence concerns.

Second, perceptions about the extent of the school violence problem are not always either internally consistent or consistent with the available data. There is a widespread perception that violent crimes are increasing, but Texas data show that violent crimes are decreasing. School administrators almost unanimously perceive that school violence has increased in the past five years, but not in their schools. Teachers almost unanimously report that they feel safe in their school during the school day, but at the same time are more concerned than administrators about violent, criminal, and unhealthy student behaviors.

Third, many school programs initiated in response to concerns about school safety and violence prevention have grown out of drug use prevention programs implemented during the past decade. Others have been in response to more general concerns such as the need for greater parental responsibility and participation in the school. Difficulties in evaluating these programs in relation to school safety and violence prevention have been exacerbated by the lack of uniform data.

This report describes the scope of the school violence problem based on the available data. The primary purpose of the report, however, is to describe current national and Texas policy initiatives and programs related to school safety and violence prevention. National programs, if passed, will direct millions of dollars to schools over the next few years to fund school safety efforts. Mechanisms to collect school violence data are being established nationally and in Texas that will provide a baseline of information against which the effectiveness of new programs can be measured. Locally, schools and districts are already implementing a variety of programs in response to concerns about school safety and violence prevention.

School Violence Data

There are no uniform national or state crime data for crimes committed at schools. Nor are there national or state data on student misbehavior and school disciplinary actions. The status of violence, crime, and misbehavior in and around schools must be inferred from the data that are available. Uniform data on crimes and arrests are available for Texas and the United States for 1992 and prior years. The arrest data is reported by age of the person arrested, allowing analysis of arrests of school-age youth.

National and Texas survey data provide information on educator perceptions about criminal, disruptive, and unhealthy behaviors at school. Data are also available on perceptions about the effectiveness of programs to prevent these behaviors. Although these data cannot be validated with actual reports of occurrences, they do provide valuable insight into attitudes of educators about school problems and the types of actions they are taking in response to these problems.

Crime in the U.S. and Texas

The Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) system is used by law enforcement agencies nationally to report criminal offenses and arrests based on a uniform classification and reporting system. A crime index has been developed by UCR to report variations in crime. The index includes four violent crimes (murder, rape, aggravated assault, and robbery) and three nonviolent or property crimes (burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft). Almost 14.5 million index crimes were reported nationally in 1992, the most recent year for which data are available. This results in a crime rate of 5,660.2 crimes per 100,000 people, a four percent decrease over the 1991 crime rate.

Chart 1

Texas Independent School District Police Departments

Number of Reporting Districts: 9
Enrollment: 298,763

Offense	Offenses Reported
Murder	0
Rape	2
Robbery	24
Aggravated Assault	162
Burglary	288
Larceny-Theft	1,932
Motor Vehicle Theft	71
Total	**2,479**

Nine Texas school districts pilot tested the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) system in 1992. This is a national system of crime reporting that law enforcement agencies have been using for many years. The chart presents the number of index crimes that these nine districts reported.

Violent crimes make up just over 13 percent of the index crimes reported nationally, but property crimes account for all of the decrease in the crime rate.

Arrests are reported separately for persons under 15 and under 18 years of age. Almost 600,000 juveniles under the age of 15 were arrested for all crimes in the United States in 1992. This number increases to almost 1.7 million when youth 15 to 17 years old are included. Arrests of persons under the age of 18 account for almost 17 percent of all arrests.

Almost six percent of arrests of persons under 18 are for the four violent crimes included in the crime index. The number of arrests in this category increased about five percent from 1991 to 1992. The increase could be the result of either an increase in violent crimes committed by young people or more law enforcement resources directed toward this group.

In Texas over 1.2 million index crimes were committed in 1992. The Texas crime rate of 7,056.5 is considerably higher than the national rate. However, the Texas crime rate decreased almost ten percent from 1991 to 1992. Violent crimes make up over 11 percent of the index crimes reported in 1992. The violent crime rate decreased by four percent from 1991 to 1992.

Over 64,000 juveniles under 15 years old were arrested in Texas in 1992. When youth ages 15 through 17 are included, the number increases to over 172,000. Almost 17 percent of all arrests in Texas in 1992 were of persons under 18 years old.

Under five percent of the arrests of persons under 18 in Texas in 1992 are for the four violent crimes included in the crime index. Arrests in this category increased almost 13 percent from 1991 to 1992. The most common crime for which school-age persons are arrested, however, is running away from home. Runaways account for 19 percent of arrests of persons under 18 years old. (Page 3 provides additional information on U.S. and Texas crime trends).

Crime at School

The 1990 federal Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act requires some educational institutions, including school districts, to maintain certain crime and arrest data. The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) UCR Unit is holding discussions with Texas Education Agency staff regarding implementation of a UCR system for Texas school districts. Nine pilot districts reported UCR data to DPS for 1992.

The school UCR system will parallel the existing system in recording crime and arrests on school property for activities that are criminal offenses under state or federal law. Disruptive behaviors commonly associated with school violence, such as verbal abuse of teachers by students, do not fall under the UCR. The UCR covers all crimes reported by campus police departments, not just those crimes committed by students.

As Chart 1 shows, larceny-theft made up 78 percent of the reported crimes in these nine UCR pilot districts. Larceny-theft is the unlawful taking, carrying, leading, or riding away of property from the possession of another. About 55 percent of all Texas index crime reports are for larceny-theft. Burglary, the next most commonly reported crime committed on school campuses, made up less than 12 percent of the reported cases compared to 23 percent of cases statewide. Burglary is the unlawful entry of a structure with the intent to commit a felony or a theft.

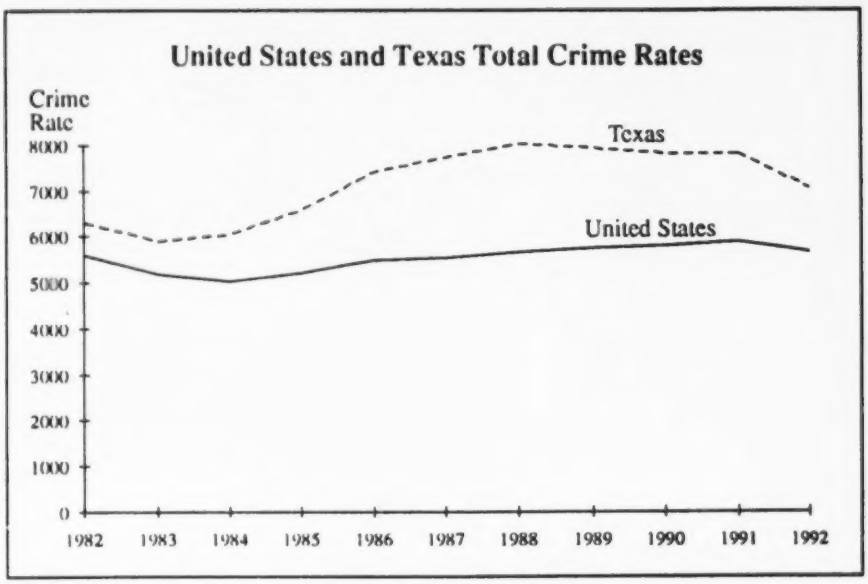
Trends in United States and Texas Crime Rates

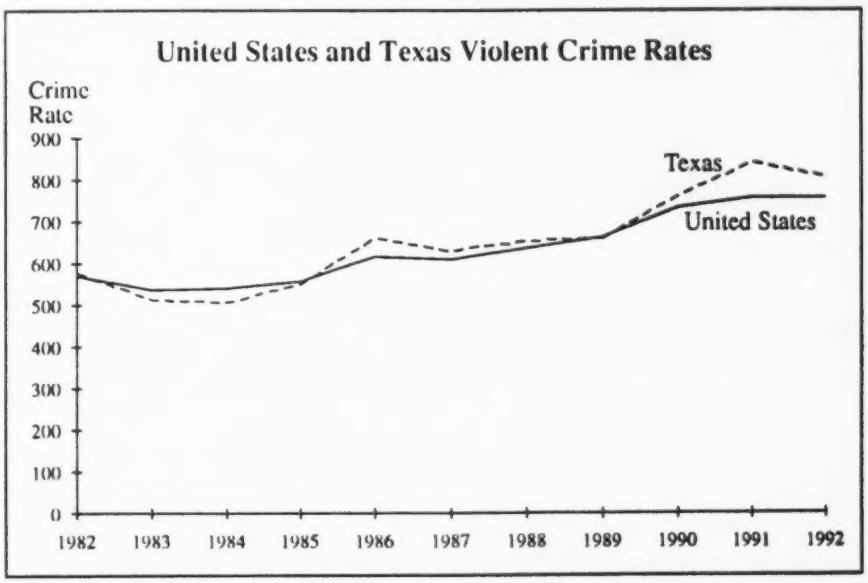
The Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) system crime index was created to compare crime patterns across time and location. The seven crimes included in the index are murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft. These crimes were selected for inclusion in the index because they are serious by either their nature or frequency of occurrence. The crime rate is the frequency of crime per 100,000 people.

In 1992, 88.6 percent of Texas index crimes were property crimes, and 11.4 percent were violent crimes. This compares to 86.6 percent and 13.4 percent nationally.

The United States index crime rate decreased from 1983 to 1984, before beginning a gradual upward trend that continued until 1991. The 1992 crime rate, the latest for which data are available, reflected a four percent decrease from 1991. During the same decade, the Texas index crime rate increased each year from 1983 to 1988, when it began a downward trend that continued through 1992. The Texas crime rate decreased by almost 10 percent from 1991 to 1992.

The U.S. violent crime rate increased eight of the ten years between 1983 and 1992 and remained virtually unchanged from 1991 to 1992. The Texas violent crime rate increased six of the ten years, but decreased four percent from 1991 to 1992. The Texas and U.S. violent crime rates are very similar; the Texas property crime rate is responsible for the difference between the Texas and U.S. crime rates.





Property crimes are a financial concern to schools. The National School Safety Center, one of the leading resources for districts and campuses who are trying to make their campuses safer, estimates that the replacement and repair costs resulting from school crime are between $100 and $200 million annually.

In a 1993 paper on reducing school violence, the Appalachia Educational Laboratory and Tennessee Education Agency maintained that violence in schools is a reflection of violence in society. This recognition gives little comfort to students and school staff. Acts of violence disrupt the normal school day, and fearing violence can prevent students and teachers from attending to their lessons and school work.

Perceptions About School Problems

National surveys reflect a strong perception by educators that crime in schools is increasing, especially violent crime. The results of a large national study of school administrators conducted in 1993 by the magazine, *The Executive Educator*, indicate that district and campus administrators think school violence has increased during the last five years. As Chart 2 shows, almost all administrators believed violence had increased at the national level, over 60 percent believed violence had increased for neighboring school districts, but less than 40 percent believed violence had increased in their school districts.

Elementary principals were most concerned about violence increasing in their own districts. Principals were more likely to indicate that violence had increased in their districts than superintendents. Survey results indicate this pattern persists throughout the school organizational structure, with teachers expressing greater concerns than principals.

A 1991 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) survey asked teachers and principals whether various problems were serious or moderate in their schools. Teachers were more likely than principals to report that problems exist in their schools. School absenteeism and student tardiness were the problems most often mentioned by both teachers and principals.

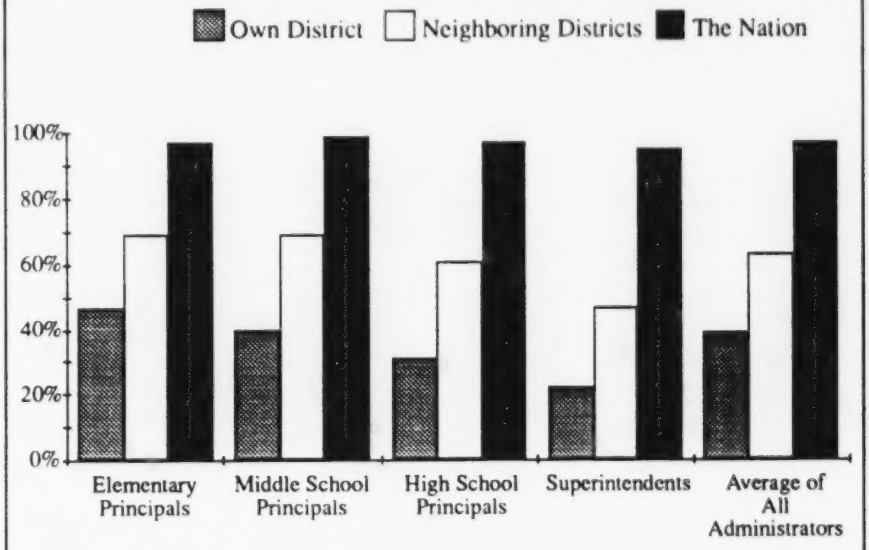
In the same survey, teachers and principals were also asked what factors limited their ability to maintain order and discipline in schools. As Chart 3 shows, both teachers and principals reported that lack of or inadequate placements for disruptive students was their most common concern. Again, teachers expressed greater concern about all factors than did principals.

Teachers were also asked what factors interfered with their teaching. Student misbehavior, defined as less serious actions that may interfere with classroom teaching, such as tardiness or talking in class, was mentioned by 44 percent of teachers. Student disruptive behavior, defined as serious and/or unlawful actions that may interfere with order in school, such as physical attacks, was mentioned by 34 percent. Student drug or alcohol use was mentioned by nine percent of the teachers. Of the teachers reporting incidents of disruptive behavior, over

Chart 2

Has School Violence Increased?

Percentage indicating increases in school violence during the last five years.



The Executive Educator *conducted a national study of administrators about their perceptions of school violence and safety in 1993. The chart illustrates that nearly all those surveyed agreed that there was an increase in school violence at the national level in the past five years. School violence was seen as more of a problem in neighboring districts than in the respondents' districts. Superintendents were least concerned about violence at their own districts while elementary school principals were the most concerned with violence increasing in their own districts.*

80 percent of the instances were verbal abuse, 16 percent were threat of injury by students, and three percent were physical assault of the teacher by a student.

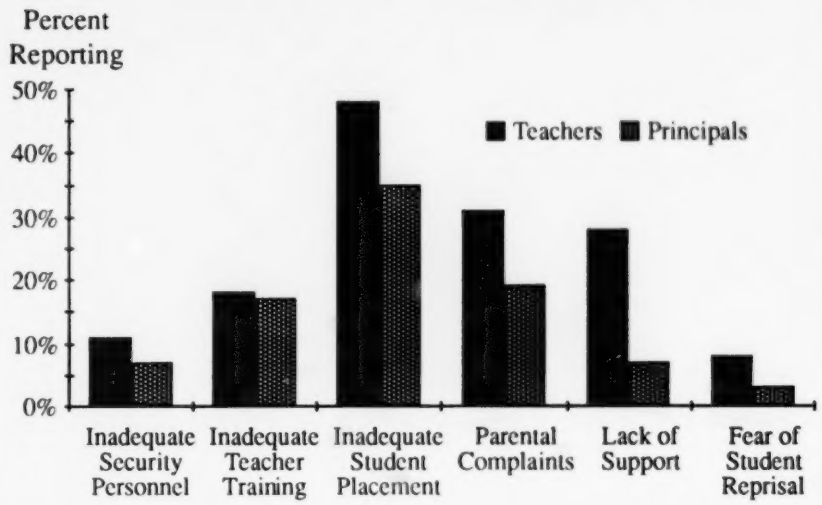
In the NCES survey, teachers nationally reported they feel safe in their own school buildings 99 percent of the time. They feel safest at the school buildings during the school day and only slightly less safe after school hours. These responses were the same across instructional levels and types or locations of the schools.

Perceptions of Texas Teachers

In 1993, the Texas Federation of Teachers (TFT) conducted a survey of over 1,400 Texas teachers in 200 districts regarding issues of safety and violence in their schools. Their responses echo the NCES survey results. Over 86 percent of the Texas teachers agreed that school violence is more of a problem now than it was five years ago. Eighty-three percent reported there was a significant student discipline or misbehavior problem outside their rooms in the school halls, cafeterias, etc. Over one-third reported a significant problem in their classrooms.

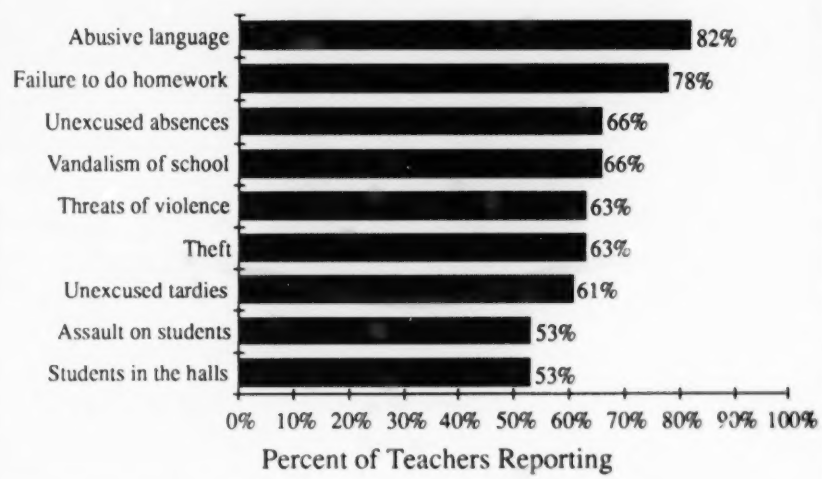
Chart 4 presents the problems most frequently reported in the TFT survey, those about which 50 percent or more of the teachers expressed concerns. Nearly 82 percent of the teachers were concerned about abusive or profane language directed by students at other students. Two academic concerns, failure of students to do homework and unexcused absences, were the next most commonly cited problems. None of the most commonly mentioned concerns involved behavior directed at teachers.

Chart 3
Factors Limiting Ability to Maintain Discipline and Order



In 1990 and 1991 NCES surveyed a large sample of teachers and principals about issues related to school safety and security. Teachers and principals both reported that lack of appropriate placements for disruptive students was the main factor limiting their abilities to maintain order and discipline. The likelihood of complaints from parents was the next biggest concern in maintaining order and discipline.

Chart 4
Top Nine Problems in Texas Schools


Abusive language 82%
Failure to do homework 78%
Unexcused absences 66%
Vandalism of school 66%
Threats of violence 63%
Theft 63%
Unexcused tardies 61%
Assault on students 53%
Students in the halls 53%
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
Percent of Teachers Reporting

In 1993 the Texas Federation of Teachers surveyed over 1,400 teachers across Texas about their concerns regarding safety issues at schools. Their major concern was abusive language between students, followed by failure to do homework and unexcused absences of students. None of the concerns on the list involve behavior directed at teachers.

Chart 5 Drug Education Program Activities	Percent of Districts
Teaching students about causes and effects of alcohol, drug, and tobacco use	100
Teaching students about laws regarding alcohol, drug, and tobacco use, possession, sales, and distribution	94
Teaching students to resist peer pressure	97
Peer counseling	48
School alcohol, drug, and tobacco policy/enforcement	94
Student assistance programs	51
School services for high-risk students	75
Referrals to counseling and treatment	90
Student drug-testing programs	9

In a 1991 National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) survey, school superintendents across the United States reported using multiple approaches in their drug education programs. Teaching students about causes and effects of alcohol, drug, and tobacco use was common to all the programs.

Perceptions about Programs

Superintendents surveyed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in 1991 indicated that all their schools offered programs about the dangers of alcohol, drug, and tobacco use. Research supports using multiple strategies to prevent substance abuse and school violence, and Chart 5 shows that most districts reported addressing multiple areas in their drug education programs. Superintendents were also asked about discipline measures used for disruptive student behavior or for alcohol and drug use, possession, or sales. Suspension was the most common method used followed by transfer to an alternative school. Expulsion was used least often. In a 1993 national survey conducted by the National School Boards Association, however, expulsion was reported as a commonly used practice.

Principals were more likely than teachers to believe that alcohol, drug, and tobacco use were not a problem in their schools. Of those who thought these behaviors were a problem in their schools, both principals and teachers were most likely to report that programs were moderately effective. Teachers were more likely than principals to believe programs were not very or not at all effective, and less likely to believe they were highly effective.

Student Behaviors

The national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conducted a survey in 1992 of a random sample of almost 1,400 high school students in the New York City public schools about violence-related attitudes and behaviors. Over 36 percent of the students said they had been physically threatened outside the school. The number of incidents reported decreased to 14 percent within the school building. Twenty-five percent of the respondents reported that they had been involved in a physical fight, not necessarily at school. When asked about carrying weapons, 21 percent of the students reported they had carried either a gun, knife, or club in the last 30 days, again not necessarily at school. The percentage of students carrying weapons was the same for students who had metal detector programs at their schools as for those who did not.

Summary

These data do not tell us either what kinds of crimes and discipline problems are occurring in Texas schools or whether violence in schools is increasing. Nor do they tell us what kinds of prevention and intervention measures are most effective. The data tell us that arrests of school-age persons, those under 18, account for about 17 percent of all arrests nationally and in Texas. Although the Texas and national crime rates are decreasing, arrests of school-age persons for violent crimes are increasing.

Teachers and principals perceive that crime in schools is increasing, with teachers reporting greater concerns than principals and principals reporting greater concerns than superintendents. Principals are also more likely than teachers to report that programs in their own schools to address crime and violence are effective. Principals and other campus and district administrators are much more likely to perceive that crime is increasing outside of their own schools or districts.

National School Safety Initiatives

Several national initiatives related to school safety and violence prevention have been introduced, most in the last two years. Two major federal initiatives are the proposed Safe Schools Act of 1993 and the reauthorization and expansion of existing acts under the umbrella of the drug-free schools effort. Educational organizations have launched their own efforts to address the problems of crime and violence in the nation's schools. The following section outlines these national initiatives.

Safe Schools Act of 1993

In June 1993 Secretary of Education Richard Riley announced the Safe Schools Act. If authorized, this act would be the first to funnel federal assistance to local schools in order to fight crime and would allow grants of $75 million in fiscal year (FY) 1994 and $100 million in FY 1995 to school districts most troubled by high crime rates. The proposed Safe Schools Act would allow schools to design their own school safety plans. The plans may include hiring security officers or developing programs that include peer mediation and conflict resolution. However, only one-third of the funds received may be spent on security measures such as metal detectors. The Safe Schools Act also provides resources and authority to the secretary of education to increase public awareness about school crime and violence, improve research and data collection in this area, and provide information about new programs and strategies to address the problem in schools.

Crime Bill

President Clinton's proposed crime bill includes a safe schools program that is separate from the Safe Schools Act. The program included in the crime bill is administered by the U.S. Department of Justice rather than the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), which will administer funds for the Safe Schools Act. If authorized, the safe schools program is expected to receive $100 million over three years that will go to local education agencies. Under this program, there is no limit to the amount of money that may be spent for security measures such as metal detectors. The crime bill also includes an amendment known as the Ounce of Prevention Program that establishes an Ounce of Prevention Council in charge of awarding grants to schools, non-

Sexual Harassment in Public Schools

While not commonly addressed as a school safety issue, sexual harassment in schools is an underreported offense that touches a surprisingly large number of America's public school students. Four out of five of the 1,600 students in an American Association of University Women (AAUW) survey responded that they had experienced some form of sexual harassment during their school careers. The survey, which included students in grades 8 through 11, defined sexual harassment as unwanted and unwelcome sexual behavior that interfered with the student's life. Behaviors that the student liked or wanted were not considered harassment. The types of harassment most often experienced concerned sexual comments, jokes, gestures, or looks directed toward them.

A second surprising finding of the survey was that the gender gap was narrower than expected, with 76 percent of boys reporting that they were sexually harassed in addition to 85 percent of girls. Students who reported experiencing sexual harassment were most likely to report that their first experience with sexual harassment occurred in grades 6 through 9.

Most students who experienced harassment reported being harassed by a peer. Two-thirds of boys and over one-half of girls also admitted to sexually harassing someone (in most cases a peer) at school. Although fellow students were the most common offenders, 18 percent of the students reported being harassed by school staff such as a teacher, bus driver, coach, or counselor. Students reported that instances of harassment occurred most often in the school hallways and in classrooms. When questioned why people might engage in sexual harassment, almost 40 percent of students responded that it was just part of school life, a lot of people did it, or it was no big deal; 25 percent responded that they thought the person liked it.

The AAUW survey also questioned students about the educational, emotional, and behavioral impact that sexual harassment had on them. Girls reported greater problems in all three areas as a result of harassment than did boys. About one-third of girls reported not wanting to go to school or talk as much in class as an outcome of being sexually harassed, compared to only 12 or 13 percent of boys. Girls were much more likely to report feeling embarrassed, self-conscious, and less sure of themselves than boys. Girls also reported greater behavioral consequences; they were much more likely to avoid the person who harassed them or to avoid certain places in school or on school grounds.

profit organizations, and other community organizations providing prevention services.

Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act

The USDE proposed Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) legislation will reauthorize the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act as the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, which will require all districts to have prekindergarten through 12th grade comprehensive safe and drug-free schools programs. School districts will be required to have anti-violence programs as well as drug-free schools programs to receive ESEA drug-free schools funds for their campuses. Up to $500 million is expected to be appropriated, 80 percent of which will go to state education agencies and 20 percent to governors' offices to prevent violence and drug use among young people. Currently, Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act funds may not be used to pay for violence prevention or school safety initiatives. However, activities related to violence prevention covered in the Safe Schools Act will become allowable in the reauthorized Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act.

In 1992, the USDE National Drug-Free Schools Recognition Program was expanded to promote school safety and discipline. The purpose of this program, established in 1987, is to acknowledge schools that have worked to achieve a safe, disciplined, and drug-free school environment—or are making great strides toward meeting that goal. To receive recognition under this program, schools must demonstrate an effective program for preventing or significantly decreasing the incidence of tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use on their campuses that clearly contains a "no use" message. They must also demonstrate a commitment to safe schools through a sound, well-articulated discipline policy that includes standards of conduct and penalties for violating the policy; and clear provisions for reporting and maintaining records on behavioral problems as well as tobacco, alcohol, and other drug violations.

Eighty-one public and private schools in 30 states and the District of Columbia gained recognition in two categories for their programs in the 1992-93 school year. Thirteen schools in Texas received recognition in 1992-93; 11 for their comprehensive programs for achieving safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools, and two for noteworthy prevention components. Texas leads the nation in the number of schools recognized through this program since its inception in 1987, with 41 schools out of 312 national winners coming from Texas.

National School Safety Center

The National School Safety Center (NSSC), a partnership of the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Department of Education, and Pepperdine University, was established in 1984 by presidential mandate. The NSSC serves as a national clearinghouse for programs related to the prevention of violence on campuses. More specifically, the center provides resources, training, and technical assistance to school districts and law enforcement agencies with regard to school crime prevention, gangs, weapons in school, crisis management, and safe school planning. Texas provides a local branch, the Texas School Safety Center, within the Texas Education Agency.

This center serves to disseminate information about resources and training available through the national center. The following school security measures have been recommended by the NSSC:

- School districts should coordinate local school security committees or task forces comprised of school officials, law enforcers, other providers of youth services, parents, and students to plan and regularly update school safety and security measures.
- School site administrators must acquire "crime-resistance savvy" and take greater responsibility in working with the school board and district to implement site security programs.
- Schools must develop comprehensive crisis management plans that incorporate resources available through other community agencies.
- A school communications network should be established that links classrooms and school yard supervisors with the front office or security staff as well as local law enforcement and fire departments.
- School staff should be informed and regularly updated on safety plans through inservice training.
- Parents and community volunteers should be used to help patrol surrounding neighborhoods and supervise the campus before, during, and after school.
- Access points to school grounds should be limited and monitored during the school day. Visitors should be required to sign in and wear identification.
- Students should be taught to take responsibility for their own safety by reporting suspicious individuals or unusual activity on school grounds and by learning personal safety and conflict resolution techniques.

Texas Initiatives

State-level initiatives related to school safety have also been under way during the past two years, including initiatives by the State Board of Education (SBOE) and the commissioner of education, the Office of the Attorney General, and the Office of the Governor. Recent legislation has resulted in the establishment of special committees on school safety and violence prevention. Additionally, professional education organizations have proposed their own recommendations to reduce violence in Texas' public schools.

The Office of the Attorney General has compiled three reports on gangs in Texas, including information on successful programs and initiatives to address the issue of gangs. While the reports do not specifically focus on gangs in the schools, they do provide valuable information on an issue of interest to school staff. The first report, completed in the summer of 1991, discussed the problems of gang involvement among youth and encouraged new partnerships in the public and private sectors to address the problem. The second report, on model programs, was completed in the fall of 1991 and highlighted successful intervention and prevention programs in Texas cities. The third report, issued in 1992, updates the status of youth gang involvement in Texas cities.

The update indicates that gang involvement has increased in most of the 32 Texas cities where surveys were completed; however, changes in reporting procedures make it difficult to pinpoint the extent of the increase. The survey results also indicate that most Texas gangs are delinquent youth gangs. Delinquent youth gangs are loosely structured groups of young people, usually juveniles. They generally have a name and other identifying signs such as similar clothing style or colors. They engage in less serious delinquent and undesirable behavior.

Other types of gangs identified through the surveys were traditional turf-based gangs, gain-oriented gangs, and violent/hate gangs. Traditional turf-based gangs are usually made up of juveniles or young adults who wear an identifying sign and who are committed to defending its perceived interests against rival gangs. Gain-oriented gangs, also made up of juveniles or young adults, engage in criminal activities such as selling drugs or theft for economic gain. Violent/hate gangs are made up of juveniles and young adults whose violent acts have an ideological or religious rationale, such as racism or

Major Themes Emphasized by State Initiatives Related to School Safety and Violence Prevention

State Initiatives	Record Keeping and Reporting	Partnerships/Sharing of Information	Alternative Education Programs	Recognition/Dissemination of Information on Effective Programs
SBOE Long-Range Planning Endorsement	✓	✓	✓	✓
Roundtable	✓	✓	✓	✓
SBOE/TJPC Joint Task Force	✓	✓	✓	✓
Legislation	✓	✓	✓	
Governor's Plan	✓	✓	✓	
Compact for Safe Schools Committee		✓	✓	

State initiatives regarding the issue of school safety and violence prevention center around four major, related themes. Accurate record keeping and reporting of information allow for the sharing of meaningful information among partners and for the identification and dissemination of information on effective programs. Partnerships among state agencies and school districts allow for efficiency in recognizing the need for and in creating effective alternative programs that will adequately address the safety needs of today's schools.

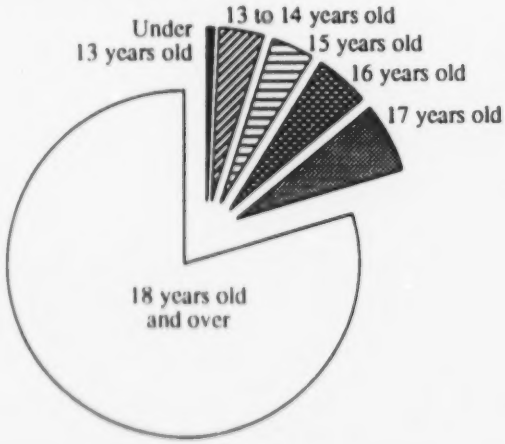
Texas Weapons Arrests

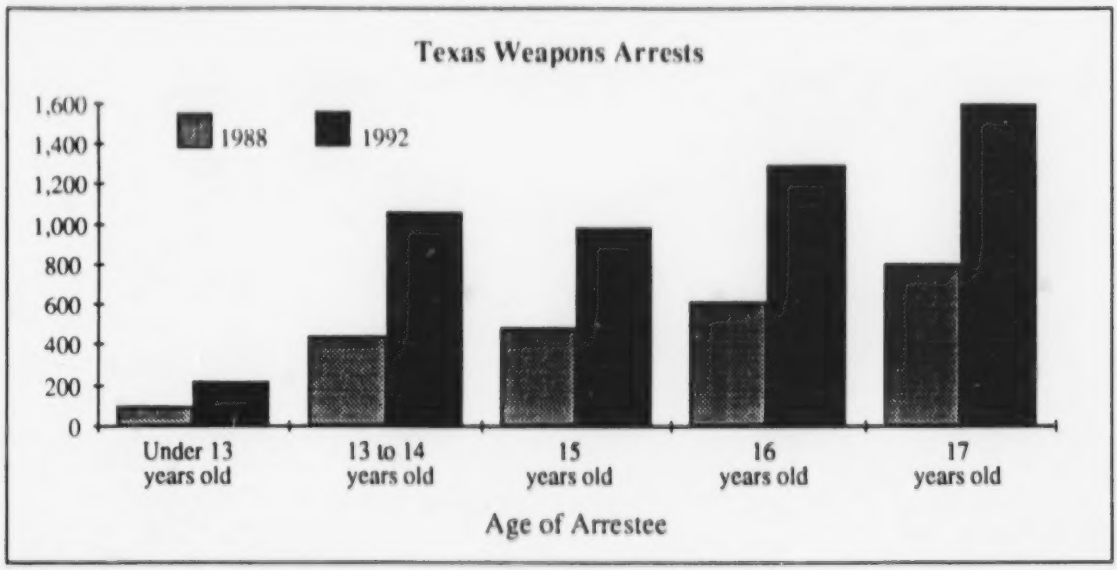
Weapons violations include carrying, using, possessing, furnishing, and manufacturing deadly weapons and silencers. Twenty percent of all Texas weapons arrests in 1992 were of school-age persons, those under 18 years old. From 1988 to 1992, arrests of both males and females under 18 for weapons violations more than doubled. Arrests of persons of all ages for weapons violations increased 40 percent.

Males under 18 are arrested for weapons violations at much higher rates than females under 18 — almost 94 percent of arrests are of males. This pattern is not unique to young people. Almost 92 percent of persons over 18 arrested for weapons violations are males. For school-age males, the largest increase in weapons arrests from 1988 to 1992 was among those aged 13 to 14. Among this group of male juveniles, there was almost a 150 percent increase, from 390 arrests in 1988 to 961 arrests in 1992. For females the largest increase was among 17 year olds, where there was a more than 175 percent increase, from 22 arrests in 1988 to 61 arrests in 1992.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) has initiated a program using contracts to keep students from bringing guns to school. The contracts are shared agreements among students, parents, and the school to work together to make schools safer. In the contracts, students agree not to bring weapons to school and to report firearms that they see at school. Parents agree to keep guns at home locked up and to teach their children about the dangers of firearms. Schools agree to teach nonviolent conflict resolution techniques and to provide a system students can use to report handguns anonymously.

Weapons Arrests, 1992





Satanism. Some small cities, most medium-sized cities, and all large cities in Texas have gangs categorized as turf-oriented or gain-oriented. Violent/hate gangs are much less common than the other types, but do exist in some Texas cities.

Governor Ann Richards' safe schools initiative, outlined in her Juvenile Justice Plan, was launched at an open forum for students in Dallas in January 1994. High school students were asked to give their recommendations for addressing the problems of crime and violence in their schools. Over the next several months, additional open forums are scheduled for high school students in other areas of the state. These forums will culminate in a youth safety summit to take place this year. The governor's plan also focuses on prevention, including continued funding for effective programs; using peace officers in schools; a zero tolerance policy for truancy; sharing information on juvenile crimes among police, schools, and probation officials; and using community initiatives that support students and their parents in areas such as recreation, job training, and counseling.

In January 1992, the SBOE Committee on Long-Range Planning endorsed five recommendations related to school safety and violence prevention that included establishing a Roundtable on School Safety and Violence Prevention. The purpose of the roundtable is to provide advisory expertise in school violence prevention. It is composed of teachers, other experts in the field of education, experts in juvenile justice, and a representative of the PTA. Roundtable members testified in support of school safety at legislative committees during the 73rd Texas legislative session. Laws addressing a variety of issues related to school safety and violence prevention passed by the 73rd session of the Texas legislature are summarized in Chart 6.

The SBOE and Texas Juvenile Probation Commission (TJPC) also established a joint task force in February 1993. The task force will solicit input from a broad representation of school districts, juvenile probation departments, and citizens regarding the problems and needs associated with juvenile crime and violence. It will also develop specific

Chart 6

House and Senate Bills — Summary Table

Bill	Resulting Action
House Bill 23	Requires the sharing of information on student arrests for serious offenses between law enforcement and the schools; requires the school principal to notify law enforcement if a criminal activity is occurring or is suspected of occurring on campus
Senate Resolution 879	Encourages collaboration between TEA and DPS in the recording of criminal incidents in the schools
House Bills 633 and 634	Outlines the commissioning and jurisdiction of peace officers
House Bill 2332	Authorizes the SBOE to establish special purpose schools or districts for those students whose needs are not met through regular schools
Senate Bill 16	Defines drug-free zones for schools
Senate Bill 213	Creates the safe schools checklist
Senate Bill 155	Creates the Texas Commission on Children and Youth

Legislation passed by the 73rd Texas Legislature has set the stage for collaboration and sharing of information among state agencies and school districts, as well as allowing for more effective, updated means of addressing the problem of violence in today's schools.

recommendations concerning truancy, collaborative training, clustered alternative schools for expelled youth, infrastructure systems that need to be established, awareness session topics, and education services in detention centers.

Several major themes have emerged as a result of state-level efforts, including the importance of forming partnerships and sharing information among schools, law enforcement, and juvenile probation agencies; the need for accurate record keeping and reporting of misconduct at school, particularly criminal misconduct; the need for establishing alternative education programs for those students who are not successful in the regular school environment; the importance of establishing a system to recognize schools with effective safety and violence prevention programs and for widely disseminating that information; and the need for staff development to better prepare teachers to handle situations that arise in their schools and classrooms. In addition to describing relevant legislation, the following sections organize the actions and recommendations of state-level policymakers around these major themes.

Forming Partnerships

The Roundtable on School Safety and Violence Prevention recommended establishing partnerships among the juvenile courts, juvenile probation, social agencies, and school districts to develop interagency information-sharing, policies, and procedures. The SBOE and TJPC joint task force is such a partnership. Senate Bill 155 also created the Texas Commission on Children and Youth. The 18-member commission will develop a comprehensive proposal to improve and coordinate public programs for children and achieve specific goals related to education, health care, juvenile justice, and family services. The commission will submit a report with recommendations to the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker by December 1, 1994, in preparation for the 74th legislative session.

The "safe schools group," begun as one of the commissioner of education's work groups created to discuss issues related to revising the Texas Education Code, has evolved into the Compact for Safe Schools Committee, with the Texas School Alliance taking the lead in drafting a Compact for Safe Schools. The committee recommends an extensive partnership among students, families, communities, districts and campuses, higher education, regional education service centers, the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the SBOE, and the legislature, and emphasizes a shared responsibility among partners for keeping schools safe and free of violence.

Sharing Information

One of the original recommendations endorsed by the SBOE was creating a data base to report and monitor firearm and weapon violence in school districts. The roundtable retained the recommendation that a data base be created but broadened the scope to include reporting and monitoring violent incidents in connection with public schools. One purpose of creating such a data base is to provide uniform statewide information for policy-making and create a baseline of information against which school safety and violence prevention programs can be evaluated.

There were two barriers to creating this data base. First, law enforcement officials were reluctant to provide schools with information related to criminal offenses committed outside the school because of concerns for confidentiality. The roundtable recommended amending the statute to require that a juvenile court inform the school district's court-related liaison when a child commits a drug offense or serious violent offense. Second, schools lacked a standard mechanism for reporting information to law enforcement officials.

The 73rd legislature passed laws removing these barriers, allowing implementation of the SBOE recommendations. House Bill 23 requires law enforcement agencies that arrest public school students for serious offenses to notify the school superintendent and provides schools confidentiality guidelines for handling this information. The information may not be attached to the student's permanent file, and the school district must destroy the information at the end of the academic year in which the report was filed. The bill also requires a school principal to notify the school district, municipal police departments, or sheriff's offices if the principal has reasonable grounds to believe criminal activity is occurring in school, on school property, or at school-sponsored or school-related activities off school property. A form was developed by TEA in conjunction with the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission and disseminated to school districts for possible use in the sharing of information with law enforcement. This activity was supported by the SBOE/TJPC joint task force, which is also developing guidelines to improve coordination of services between school districts and juvenile probation departments.

Safe Schools Zones

The SBOE requested that zero tolerance for school violence and drug abuse in and around schools be added to the list of original recommendations it endorsed in January 1992. The roundtable echoed this endorsement in its recommendation to initiate consequences to reduce the use of alcohol and other drug-related incidents, including those involving weapons, at or near schools. Senate Bill 16 defines drug-free zones for schools,

School District Response to Violence in the Schools

The National School Boards Association (NSBA), as part of their Best Practices Series, conducted a survey of 700 school districts across the country in 1993 requesting information on their attitudes and practices with regard to school safety and violence prevention. Districts reported that they focus their attention in preventing violence over a broad range of areas, as outlined in the table below.

Method	Overall	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Suspension	78%	85%	78%	75%
Student conduct/discipline code	76%	87%	79%	70%
Collaboration with other agencies	73%	93%	73%	62%
Expulsion	72%	85%	68%	70%
School board policy	71%	76%	69%	71%
Alternative programs or schools	66%	85%	66%	57%
Staff development	62%	74%	66%	52%
Conflict resolution/mediation/peer mediation	61%	82%	63%	49%
Locker searches	50%	64%	43%	49%
Closed campus for lunch	44%	46%	48%	37%
Mentoring programs	43%	65%	44%	31%
Home-school linkages	42%	55%	45%	32%
Dress codes	41%	52%	42%	33%
Law-related education programs	39%	57%	36%	33%
Multicultural sensitivity training	39%	62%	49%	18%
Parent skill training	38%	51%	39%	28%
Search and seizure	36%	51%	35%	28%
Security personnel in schools	36%	65%	40%	18%
Support groups	36%	47%	37%	28%
Student photo ID system	32%	41%	39%	20%
Gun-free school zones	31%	46%	26%	26%
Specialized curriculum	27%	48%	25%	18%
Drug-detecting dogs	24%	27%	18%	27%
Work opportunities	23%	34%	21%	19%
Telephones in classrooms	22%	31%	21%	16%
Metal detectors	15%	39%	10%	6%
Volunteer parent patrols	13%	17%	14%	8%
Closed circuit TV	11%	19%	8%	8%
Establishing "safe havens" for students	10%	16%	9%	6%

institutions of higher education, playgrounds, video arcades, and youth centers. The law doubles the minimum term of confinement or imprisonment and maximum fine for offenses that occur in these zones.

Record Keeping and Reporting

Senate Resolution 879, effective September 1993, recommends collaboration between the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and TEA in recording incidents of criminal behavior in the public schools. Texas Education Agency staff are currently holding discussions with the DPS Uniform Crime Reporting Unit regarding the development of a uniform reporting system for school crimes. Once the system is developed, DPS, with TEA's cooperation, plans to conduct a three-month pilot with a sample of Texas districts.

Alternative Education Programs

The Roundtable on School Safety and Violence Prevention recommended establishing county-wide residential and non-residential programs for expelled students to continue their education. Funding of such alternative schools was part of the SBOE legislative recommendations to the 73rd legislature. Although funding was not provided, HB 2332 authorizes the SBOE to establish special purpose schools or school districts for educating students in special situations whose educational needs are not adequately met by regular school programs.

The SBOE/TJPC joint task force is developing proposed resolutions for consideration by the SBOE and Juvenile Probation Commission related to funding clustered alternative schools for expelled youth and funding for appropriate education services for all students in detention centers. In April 1992, the SBOE approved funding to help Bexar County initiate a program to serve expelled students in the county. The program combines support mechanisms for students with a strong community service component. The Compact for Safe Schools also discusses the use of an alternative education environment as a placement choice for students who are not successful in a traditional school setting.

Successful Programs

The roundtable recommended that TEA establish a clearinghouse to disseminate information on violence prevention. In response, TEA established the Texas School Safety Center as the state clearinghouse for the National School Safety Center. The SBOE/TJPC joint task force agreed to identify model programs and funding sources for "pre-delinquent" youth and truancy prevention programs. It also recommended that school districts that are successfully addressing truancy and alternative education services for expelled youth be identified and formally recognized. In February 1994, a program celebrating the Bexar County alternative program for expelled students was held at the San Antonio regional education service center. A SBOE Ad Hoc Committee on Communications is exploring a broad-based public awareness campaign to communicate the message of successful practices in Texas schools.

Staff Development

The recommendations endorsed by the SBOE in January 1992 directed the commissioner of education to identify experts in the fields of school psychology, social development, conflict resolution, classroom management, behavioral analysis, adolescent psychology, and violence and crisis prevention and intervention to provide expertise and information for dissemination on a regular basis to local school personnel throughout the state. They also directed TEA to develop a statewide initiative through the regional education service centers to provide school districts with staff development in curriculum that promotes multicultural, multiethnic awareness and sensitivity and conflict resolution, using the best practices available. The roundtable reiterated this need in its recommendations.

The Texas Education Agency has responded to this directive through the education service centers by providing technical assistance to campuses in assessing their school safety needs, in addition to providing varied training and development opportunities to students, school staff, and parents. The joint task force is also compiling a comprehensive list of conferences for public awareness and staff development purposes.

Safe Schools Checklist

In response to SB 213, the SBOE approved a model safe schools checklist to assess a school's safety strengths and weaknesses. The checklist provides a good definition of a safe school. The first part of the checklist is a self-assessment tool school districts may use to evaluate their needs and formulate plans related to implementing a comprehensive safety plan; communicating discipline policies and procedures; implementing intra-agency and interagency emergency plans; recording disruptive incidents; training staff and students; assessing buildings and grounds; handling visitors; assigning personnel in emergencies; communicating during emergencies and managing emergencies; providing safe transportation; handling accidents; and communicating with law enforcement authorities.

The second part of the checklist contains questionnaires to be completed by teachers, parents, and students. The checklist was developed with assistance from the National School Safety Center, other state departments of education, members of the Roundtable on School Safety and Violence Prevention, drug-free

schools and communities consultants from the Texas regional education service centers, and Texas elementary, middle, and high school mentor campuses.

School Safety and Violence Prevention Programs

As interest in school safety and violence prevention has increased, national and state organizations have focused their efforts on identifying successful programs and expanding the research base related to prevention and intervention strategies. The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) Office of Educational Research and Improvement conducted a review of research relevant to national education goal six, related to safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools. While offering conclusions concerning ways to prevent school violence, the USDE report stressed the importance of comprehensive approaches using multiple strategies. A national survey on the status of school violence and its prevention conducted by the National School Boards Association (NSBA) found that schools are using multiple strategies to prevent violence.

In 1992-93, 11 Texas schools were recognized nationally by the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Recognition Program as having exemplary comprehensive drug-free and violence prevention programs. Of these

Schools Receiving National Recognition Through the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Recognition Program — Summary of Program Components

School Name	Use of Immediate Security Measures	Use of Intervention/Prevention Measures	Use of General Proactive Measures
Reeves Elementary Silsbee ISD		✓	✓
Thomas Elementary Plano ISD		✓	✓
White Elementary El Paso ISD		✓	✓
Landolt Elementary Clear Creek ISD	✓	✓	✓
Kleb Intermediate Klein ISD	✓	✓	✓
Hardin Junior High Hardin ISD	✓	✓	✓
Hobby Middle School Northside ISD	✓	✓	✓
Blunt Middle School Aransas Pass ISD		✓	✓
Diboll Middle School Diboll ISD		✓	✓
Bridgeport High School Bridgeport ISD		✓	✓
Spring High School Spring ISD	✓	✓	✓

Eleven schools in Texas were recognized nationally as having exemplary comprehensive programs for school safety and violence prevention, including the prevention of tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use.

schools, four serve elementary students in grades ranging from kindergarten through grade 6; five serve middle school students in grades 5-9; and two serve high school students in grades 9-12. Program strategies most commonly used by these successful programs fall into three major categories: immediate security methods, prevention and intervention measures directly related to safety and violence prevention, and general proactive measures.

Immediate Security Methods

Immediate security methods include measures for securing the campus such as closing the campus during the school day, installing security alarms, and installing built-in metal detectors at entrances. Some schools hire security personnel, such as security guards or campus police, or contract with local police departments to provide additional campus security. Schools also provide two-way radios and hand-held metal detectors to school personnel responsible for monitoring the halls and grounds; and install surveillance mirrors in hallways. Other immediate security methods used by campuses are searching student lockers and using dogs to detect drugs or weapons.

Responses to the NSBA survey from 700 urban, suburban, and rural school districts across the country showed that half of the districts conducted locker searches; just over one-third used security personnel in the schools; about one-fourth used drug-detecting dogs; and less than one-fifth used metal detectors. According to the 1991 inventory of Texas school facilities, one-third of the state's 6,100 campuses had no campus security in 1991; just over half had security alarm systems; and 13 percent had hired campus police or security guards.

Four of the seven Texas middle school and high school campuses receiving recognition under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Recognition Program used methods designed to provide immediate security on their campuses. The elementary campuses were least likely to use immediate security methods, although one elementary school had its major hallways equipped with surveillance mirrors that allowed the hallways to be viewed at all times.

Kleb Intermediate School in Klein ISD, outside Houston, has 811 students in grades 6-8. The students are 82 percent white, seven percent Hispanic, six percent African American, and five percent Asian. Only five percent of the students qualify for the federal free or reduced price lunch program, which is available to students from low-income families. Kleb Intermediate School has a closed campus (students are not allowed off campus for lunch); hand-held radios are available for communication among administrators, nurses, and counselors as needed; and a drug-detecting dog has made unannounced visits. Additionally, Klein police patrol the area 24 hours a day, and one officer is stationed at each high school so they can respond quickly to a call.

Hobby Middle School in Northside ISD, near San Antonio, has 1,219 students in grades 6-8. The students are 65 percent white, 29 percent Hispanic, four percent African American, and three percent Asian. Twenty-six percent of the students qualify for free or reduced price lunches. Hobby Middle School has a Northside ISD security officer assigned to its campus one-half time. The officer is shared with another middle school in the area and is available in case of emergency.

Hardin Junior High School in Hardin ISD, in Liberty County in southeast Texas, has 378 students in grades 5-8. The students at Hardin Junior High School are 88 percent white, seven percent Hispanic, four percent African American, and one percent Asian. Forty percent of the students qualify for free or reduced price lunches. Hardin Junior High School has had a drug-detecting dog make unannounced visits.

Spring High School in Spring ISD, near Houston, has 2,265 students in grades 9-12. The students are 79 percent white, 11 percent Hispanic, eight percent African American, and two percent Asian. Nine percent of students qualify for free or reduced price lunches. Spring High School has two armed school district police officers, trained as peace officers, assigned to the school full time. Police officers are present at all school functions as well. Students carry photo ID's while on campus. Assistant principals have two-way radios for direct communication with each other, with police officers, and with buses. Hand-held metal detectors, as well as dogs trained to detect drugs and guns, are available and are used as necessary.

Prevention and Intervention Measures

Prevention measures directly related to school safety are the focus of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Recognition Program and are found in all of the award-winning schools. Prevention measures are designed to prevent violent incidents from occurring through activities such as teaching students conflict resolution skills. In contrast, interventions are used after violent, criminal, or disruptive incidents occur and emphasize disciplinary actions such as removing the disruptive students from the classrooms or schools.

Maintaining a fair, consistently enforced discipline policy is one recommendation coming from the USDE review of research related to education goal six. Use of a strict

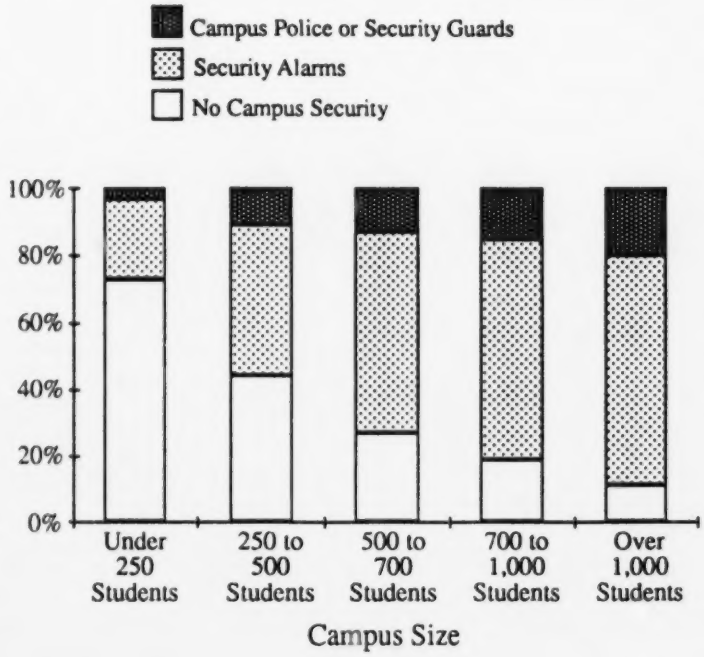
Campus Security

The Texas school facility inventory reported that one- third of the state's 6,100 campuses had no campus security in 1991. Just over half of the campuses had security alarm systems. The remaining 13 percent, almost 700 campuses, hired either campus police or security guards.

High schools were no more likely to have security alarms, campus police, or security guards than middle schools or elementary schools in 1991. However, campuses with over 1,000 students were almost seven times more likely to have campus police or security guards than campuses with fewer than 250 students. Large campuses and security concerns are both typically associated with large urban school districts. However, campuses with over 1,000 students are common in Texas suburban school districts and are also found in smaller city and non-metropolitan districts. Three campuses with over 1,000 students are located in school districts with fewer than 3,000 students.

Large campuses were also more likely to have their buildings equipped with two-way intercoms. Almost three-fourths of campuses with over 1,000 students had two-way intercoms in 1991, compared to one-third of the campuses with under 100 students.

Elementary campuses were more likely to be completely fenced than other types of campuses. The type of community in which a campus was located, however, made the greatest difference in whether or not the grounds were fenced. Almost 58 percent of the campuses in major urban districts were completely fenced, and an additional 39 percent were partially fenced. Only 27 percent of campuses statewide were completely fenced. Major urban districts are the eight largest school districts that serve the metropolitan areas of Austin, Corpus Christi, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio.



Campus Enrollment	Percent With Complete Fence	Percent With Two-Way Intercom
Over 1,000	31.1	74.3
700 to 1,000	29.4	73.3
500 to 1,000	30.5	69.1
250 to 500	26.4	61.1
100 to 250	18.6	45.7
Under 100	25.5	33.2
Campus Type		
Elementary	32.9	68.2
Middle School	22.6	67.9
High School	17.7	61.6
Elementary/Secondary	21.9	45.4
State Total	**27.6**	**65.7**

student conduct or discipline code was the second most common measure reported by schools in the NSBA survey. Texas requires school districts and campuses to prepare discipline management plans. Legislation passed in 1993 to bring about greater local administrative efficiency repeals the requirement that districts maintain a separate discipline management plan but directs them to incorporate components of the discipline management plan into a larger planning document.

Expanding on the recommendation for a consistently enforced discipline policy, the Texas Federation of Teachers (TFT) offered the zero tolerance concept with regard to setting consequences for specific disciplinary infractions. Zero tolerance policies generally outline a set of behaviors that are not tolerated on the campus. Students are removed from the regular school setting for any infraction that falls within the scope of the policy. The TFT adopted a resolution in June 1993 that calls for zero tolerance for violence at schools, foul and profane language on school grounds, and drugs or weapons at school.

As with many zero tolerance policies, the TFT resolution emphasizes the need for alternative settings for students removed from the regular school setting. Alternative schools provide an academic program for students who have been removed from the conventional school setting. Ideally, different methodologies are used to meet the needs of students who have been unable to succeed in the traditional school setting. Zero tolerance of criminal activities and the provision of alternative placement for students removed from the regular program are also at the heart of the Compact for Safe Schools being developed by a group of Texas school districts.

Whether or not zero tolerance is the approach used, effective discipline management plans describe the intervention measures to be used when infractions of the discipline policy occur. The NSBA survey found that suspension is the intervention measure used most often. Expulsion from school is also widely used. Suspension involves temporarily dismissing a student from the regular classroom to a different area of the school (in-school suspension) or to a separate facility or the student's home (out-of-school suspension). Texas statute limits out-of-school suspensions to six days in a semester. Expulsion withdraws the student from school for the semester, year, or permanently. In Texas, students are not expelled permanently.

The USDE report, which focuses on prevention measures, recommends that schools use violence prevention curricula and provide conflict resolution training to reduce fights and change attitudes toward solving problems physically. The NSBA study found that providing staff and student training and development in areas such as conflict resolution and mediation, including peer mediation, are violence prevention measures widely used by schools. Conflict resolution has long been seen as a fundamental skill for administrators. It is traditionally aimed at permitting, but controlling, conflict for beneficial purposes. Mediation implies an active effort to help disputing parties reach an agreement by clarifying issues, asking questions, and making specific proposals. A peer mediation program is one in which students are taught mediation skills so they can help other students resolve conflicts.

The USDE also recommends that schools coordinate their efforts with local law enforcement and with the community. The NSBA survey found that collaborations with other agencies are widely used by the schools surveyed. With respect to reducing student drug use, the USDE recommends programs that include resistance skills and other more generic social skills or life skills. Programs that include peer leaders in addition to adult leaders are also recommended.

All 11 of the Texas schools receiving recognition under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Recognition Program in 1992-93 use prevention and intervention measures directly related to school safety and violence prevention. Most commonly used measures at all levels (elementary, middle, high school) include establishing a detailed discipline management plan that specifies sanctions for offenses; zero tolerance policies with regard to criminal activity, possibly resulting in referral to an alternative education program; and the use of specific curriculum to teach decision-making skills, conflict resolution, refusal skills, and life skills.

Zach White Elementary School in El Paso ISD serves 816 students in grades 1-6. The student body is 54 percent white, 44 percent Hispanic, one percent African American, and one percent Asian. Almost one-third of the students qualify for free or reduced price lunches. White Elementary School's discipline management plan specifies sanctions for violations that increase with repeat offenses. Serious first time offenses such as the possession or use of tobacco, drugs, or alcohol; public profanity; the possession of a weapon; or assault of a staff member are considered to be Level 3 or 4 offenses. These offenses call for options such as suspension, referral to an alternative program, assignment to home-based instruction, assignment to a drug or alcohol program, or expulsion. A repeat of any of these behaviors is considered a Level 4 offense, for which expulsion is the sanction. A copy of the discipline management plan is given to each student.

Teachers also distribute copies of their class discipline plans to students. Parents must sign the class discipline plans and return them to the teacher. Parents and students have input into the school's discipline policy through the Campus Improvement Committee; and the Student Citizen's Committee, which includes student representatives from grades 4-6 as well as parents.

Each science class includes lessons on the prevention of drug and alcohol use. A team from the district office presents self-esteem-building lessons to grades 4-6 several times a year, which include lessons on decision-making, goal setting, and self responsibility. Counseling services are available to students through a student assistance program, a regular after-school program that works with a core committee made up of teachers, the at-risk counselor, the school nurse, and the principal. Individual counseling services are also available with the at-risk counselor. Students who are reentering school after having been suspended or expelled are put into the student assistance program to ease the transition back into their regular classrooms.

A. C. Blunt Middle School in Aransas Pass ISD, near Corpus Christi, serves 512 students in grades 6-8. The students are 54 percent white, 43 percent Hispanic, and three percent African American. Sixty-one percent of the students receive free or reduced price lunches. Blunt Middle School has established a three-level discipline management plan. Level 1 involves less serious offenses, and level 3 involves serious misconduct as well as criminal behavior. Repeat misconduct can result in more stringent sanctions than a first offense. Students guilty of level 3 misconduct can be suspended or expelled from school depending on the exact nature of the misconduct.

Blunt Middle School enforces a "no use" policy with regard to alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. The school provides a smoke free environment for staff as well. Teachers use the supplemental drug use prevention curriculum developed by the TEA and receive staff training on issues related to the prevention of violence and alcohol and drug use.

An academic advisory period was established for students for 30 minutes each day. Each student is assigned an academic advisor who works with the student on establishing good study, decision-making, and problem-solving skills. Referrals to counselors can be made if students are in need of additional assistance.

Bridgeport High School in Bridgeport ISD, near the Dallas/Ft. Worth area, serves 447 students in grades 9-12. The student body is 80 percent white, 18 percent Hispanic, one percent Asian, and one percent American Indian. About one-fourth of the students are eligible for free or reduced price lunches. Bridgeport High School has a clearly stated discipline plan with more serious sanctions for repeated offenses. A local discipline management committee was formed to keep the plan updated. The concept of discipline with assistance is built into the discipline plan, which allows students to receive the help they need and not just a disciplinary action.

Teachers use the TEA supplemental drug use prevention curriculum in all subject areas to teach decision-making skills, and to promote positive self-esteem as well as physical well-being. A student advisory team gives input to school staff regarding school safety policies, and a student assistance team operates in the school and works cooperatively with staff to help students deal with problems in a safe, supportive environment. Another student group, Leaders in Peer Support, is made up of students selected by their peers and trained by staff to serve as a support group to troubled students and respond to sensitive questions.

Students who are reentering school after a suspension meet regularly with the school counselor and are encouraged to attend support group meetings held on the school campus. Reentering students may also receive needed support through the student assistance team.

General Proactive Measures

General proactive measures are strategies that, while not directly related to school safety and violence prevention, provide a school environment that is more positive, more inclusive of student, parent, and community input, and thus, more conducive to learning. These measures include opportunities for parent and community involvement in campus activities, parent education and training programs covering issues such as the normal stages of child development and how to promote positive self-esteem, and mentor programs. Positive social activities for students, including school-related athletic events, clubs, and school pride activities, as well as academic tutoring and assistance with homework, are other activities that create a school environment that is positive and conducive to learning. All 11 of the schools recognized in the 1992-93 Safe and Drug-Free Schools Recognition Program have implemented such programs. The SBOE in its Long-Range Plan for Public Education, 1991-1995, also recommends the use of general proactive measures that enhance school safety, such as developing students' citizenship skills, self-esteem, and respect for others, and the use of programs that encourage students to choose healthy lifestyles.

School facilities design, and organization and scheduling of classes are two other areas that can affect the safety and discipline of the school.

Program Success

Through the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (DFSCA) the U.S. Department of Education funds programs in 1,039 Texas school districts. Schools receiving funding through the DFSCA are required to complete an annual evaluation report with regard to the services and activities supported with DFSCA dollars. Data reported by school districts in their annual evaluations come primarily from school disciplinary reports, counselor reports, student and teacher surveys, and student records, although other sources, including crime statistics, have also been used.

The greatest successes in the DFSCA programs are reported in the areas of teacher staff development, community involvement, academic achievement, parental involvement, and student participation in cocurricular and extracurricular activities. Fewer than half of the districts reported that either attendance had improved or the number of tardies had declined. These are two student behavior problems most often mentioned by Texas teachers. About 40 percent of districts reported declines in school violence and vandalism against school property. Student involvement in crimes against the community and student use of alcohol are the two areas in which the fewest districts reported successes.

Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act
1992-93 School District Progress Report

Evaluation Results	Percent of Districts
Use of alcohol has declined.	29%
Use of tobacco has declined.	37%
Use of other illicit drugs has declined.	43%
Number of expulsions related to alcohol and other drugs has decreased.	37%
Number of disciplinary referrals related to alcohol and other drug use has decreased.	44%
Student involvement in crimes against the community has decreased.	27%
Parental involvement in school-related drug education and prevention activities has increased.	58%
Number of counseling referrals related to alcohol and other drug use has decreased.	36%
Teacher participation in staff development on alcohol and other drug use prevention has increased.	60%
Community involvement in drug education and prevention activities has increased.	60%
Attendance has improved.	45%
Cocurricular and extracurricular participation has increased.	55%
Academic achievement has improved.	59%
Number of tardies has declined.	38%
Number of incidents of school violence has declined.	39%
Vandalism against school property has declined.	41%
Dropout rate has declined.	39%

Environmental safety considerations are part of modern school facility design. These include rest room placement in areas that are not isolated from main hallways, landscaping for a safer campus, and redesigning common areas.

About half of Texas campuses had more than 500 students in 1992-93. Research on effective middle schools advocates creation of schools-within-schools, splitting large campuses into smaller units with no more than 500 students. This arrangement has the personal and social advantages of a small school environment while allowing for diversity of courses and other opportunities of a larger campus. A smaller learning environment fosters a community of learning among a group of students and teachers. Working together as a team, teachers can better communicate consistent expectations for performance and student behavior. Discipline referrals tend to decrease in a teamed environment. A 1992-93 survey of Texas middle schools found that about half have implemented academic teaming within the last two years, a policy goal in the State Board of Education Policy Statement on Middle Grade Education and Middle Grade Schools.

The State Board of Education Task Force on High School Education also recommended several proactive measures to reduce student anonymity and the isolation of staff, including the use of departmental grouping, and the restructuring of guidance and counseling services such that counselors are freed from administrative and clerical demands to focus on student-centered assessment and guidance activities. The task force also recommended pairing each student with a teacher who would guide the student in developing and monitoring an individual education plan throughout the student's high school career.

Conclusion

On the national and local levels the issue of school safety and violence prevention has come to the forefront. Millions of dollars in federal assistance are being earmarked to allow for the creation and expansion of multi-faceted safety and violence prevention programs for schools that serve students at all grade levels. Immediate security measures, prevention and intervention methods directly related to school safety and violence prevention, and more general proactive techniques are all currently being effectively used in Texas schools as part of comprehensive school safety plans.

Major themes that have emerged as a result of state-level efforts include the importance of forming partnerships and sharing information among schools, law enforcement, and juvenile probation agencies; the need for accurate record keeping and reporting of misconduct at school, particularly criminal misconduct; the importance of establishing alternative education programs for those students who cannot be successful in the regular school environment; the importance of establishing a system for recognizing schools with effective safety and violence prevention programs and for widely disseminating that information; and the need for staff development for teachers.

Recent federal and state legislation have put in place mechanisms for collecting and reporting instances of student misconduct at school. This data will not only provide more accurate information about criminal activities at school but also provide a baseline of data against which the effectiveness of new programs can be measured. At the same time, the Texas Safe Schools Checklist will provide schools with a tool to use in evaluating their own safety status and planning effective prevention and intervention programs.

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COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

TITLE VI, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; THE MODIFIED COURT ORDER, CIVIL ACTION 5281, FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT, EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS, TYLER DIVISION

Reviews of local education agencies pertaining to compliance with Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 and with specific requirements of the Modified Court Order, Civil Action No. 5281, Federal District Court, Eastern District of Texas, Tyler Division are conducted periodically by staff representatives of the Texas Education Agency. These reviews cover at least the following policies and practices:

(1) acceptance policies on student transfers from other school districts;

(2) operation of school bus routes or runs on a non-segregated basis;

(3) nondiscrimination in extracurricular activities and the use of school facilities;

(4) nondiscriminatory practices in the hiring, assigning, promoting, paying, demoting, reassigning, or dismissing of faculty and staff members who work with children;

(5) enrollment and assignment of students without discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin;

(6) nondiscriminatory practices relating to the use of a student's first language; and

(7) evidence of published procedures for hearing complaints and grievances.

In addition to conducting reviews, the Texas Education Agency staff representatives check complaints of discrimination made by a citizen or citizens residing in a school district where it is alleged discriminatory practices have occurred or are occurring.

Where a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act is found, the findings are reported to the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education.

If there is a direct violation of the Court Order in Civil Action No. 5281 that cannot be cleared through negotiation, the sanctions required by the Court Order are applied.

TITLE VII, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 AS AMENDED; EXECUTIVE ORDERS 11246 AND 11375; TITLE IX, EDUCATION AMENDMENTS; REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 AS AMENDED; 1974 AMENDMENTS TO THE WAGE-HOUR LAW EXPANDING THE AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1967; VIETNAM ERA VETERANS READJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1972 AS AMENDED; AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990; AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1991.

The Texas Education Agency shall comply fully with the nondiscrimination provisions of all Federal and State laws and regulations by assuring that no person shall be excluded from consideration for recruitment, selection, appointment, training, promotion, retention, or any other personnel action, or be denied any benefits or participation in any educational programs or activities which it operates on the grounds of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, handicap, age, or veteran status or a disability requiring accommodation (except where age, sex, or handicap constitute a bona fide occupational qualification necessary to proper and efficient administration). The Texas Education Agency is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer.

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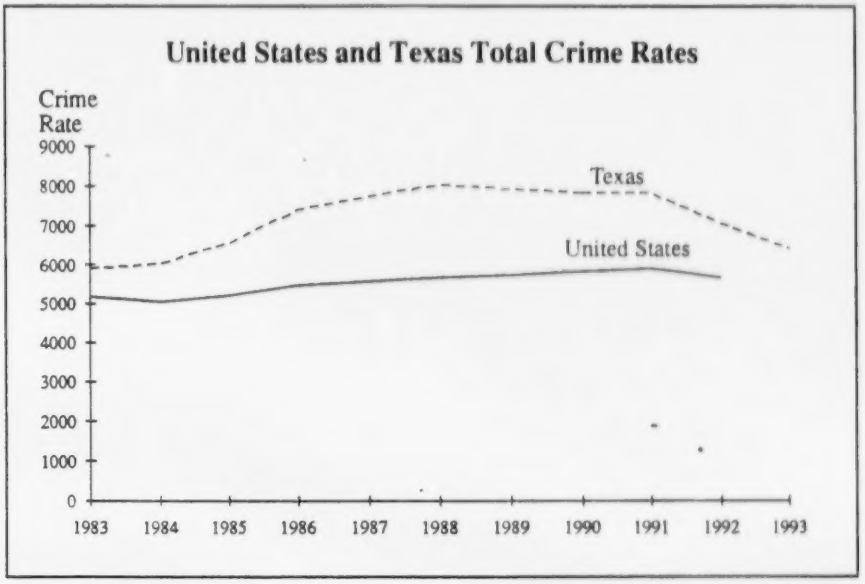
Texas Crime Trends — 1993 Update

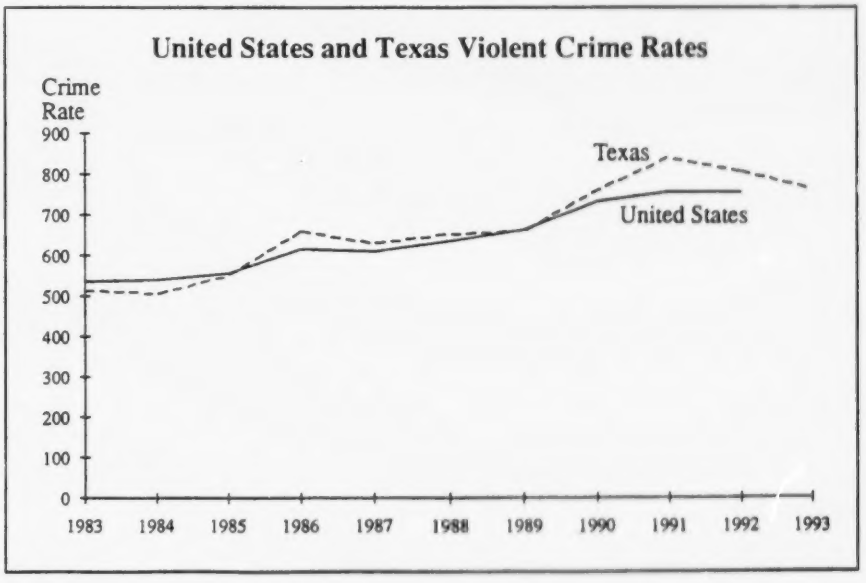
On March 23, 1994, the Texas Department of Public Safety released the annual report of Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) system data on crime in Texas in 1993. Although the 1993 data are consistent with the trends described in the Policy Research Report *Safe Texas Schools: Policy Initiatives and Programs*, this addendum updates that report for 1993.

The total crime rate in Texas continues to decrease substantially, down 8.8 percent from 1992. A slight downward trend that began in 1988 showed the first substantial decline in 1992. The violent crime rate also decreased for the second year in a row, down 5.5 percent from 1992. The Texas total crime rate in 1993 is 6,438.5, compared to 7,056.5 in 1992. The violent crime rate is 762.1, compared to 806.3 in 1992.

The UCR system is a uniform classification and reporting system for crimes that is used by law enforcement agencies nationally. A crime index, consisting of four violent and three nonviolent crimes, is used for reporting variations in crime. Violent crimes account for 11.8 percent of crimes reported in 1993, compared to 11.4 percent in 1992. Violent crimes increased as a proportion of all crimes because property crimes are decreasing even faster than violent crimes. The number of arrests has continued to increase, up 3.4 percent from 1992, even though the total number of crimes is down.

Arrests of school-age persons, those under 18 years old, is up 10.4 percent. Persons under 18 made up 17.8 percent of all arrests in 1993 compared to less than 17 percent in 1992. The arrest rate for the four violent crimes included in the index increased at almost the same rate as all arrests for persons under 18. We do not have information on increase in the size of the school-age population in Texas from 1992 to 1993. However, public school enrollment, an indicator of growth, increased by only 2.2 percent.



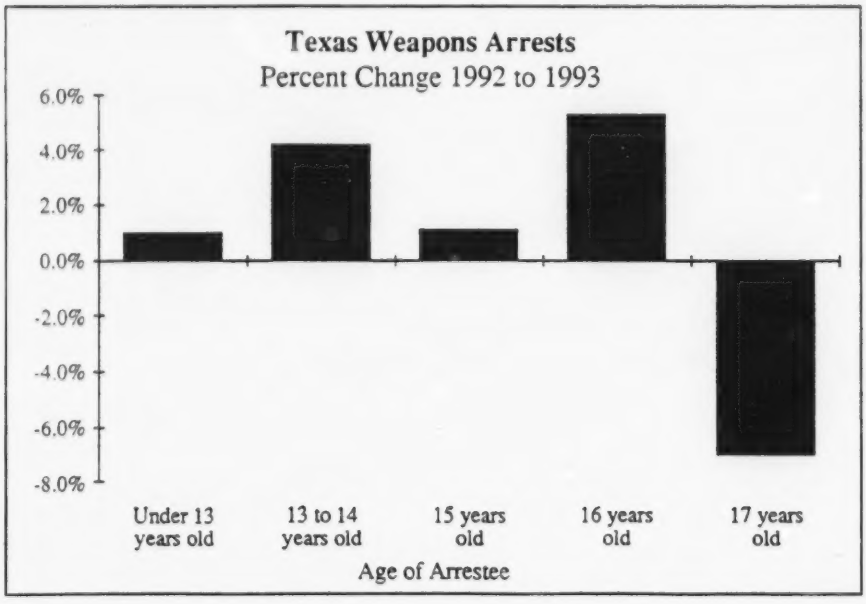


Arrests of persons of all ages and of school-age persons for weapons violations are almost unchanged from 1992 to 1993. Among school-age persons, however, there has been a shift in weapons arrests toward the younger age groups. Arrests of juveniles 16 years old and under increased from 1992 to 1993, while arrests of 17 year olds decreased seven percent. These variations could reflect either (1) change in the size of these age cohorts in the Texas population; (2) greater law enforcement resources directed toward younger age groups; (3) success of prevention efforts directed at 17 year olds, who are tried as adults; or (4) an increase in weapons possession by younger children.

Almost 24 percent of school-age persons arrested in Texas in 1993 were African American and over 39 percent were Hispanic. These designations are based on separate race and ethnic origin categories used by the U.S. Department of Commerce and do not correspond to the single race/ethnicity classification used by the Texas Education Agency. With the separate categories, a person can be counted as both African American and Hispanic. In addition, the separate categories do not provide a number of non-Hispanic whites.

1993 Arrests of Persons Under 18 Years Old

Offense	Number Arrested	Percent of All Arrests
Runaways	35,234	18.5%
Larceny-theft	35,174	18.5%
Simple assaults	13,790	7.2%
Disorderly conduct	11,925	6.3%
Burglary	10,937	5.7%
Vandalism	8,963	4.7%
Drug possession	7,331	3.9%
Motor vehicle theft	6,835	3.6%
Aggravated assault	5,224	2.7%
Curfew and loitering violations	5,223	2.7%
Weapons violations	5,146	2.7%



Running away continues to be the most common offense for which school-age youth are arrested in Texas, followed closely by larceny-theft. Runaways are juveniles taken into protective custody under provisions of local statutes. Larceny-theft includes thefts of bicycles and automobile accessories, shoplifting, and pocket-picking. It does not include motor vehicle theft or stealing that is done by use of force or violence.

Drug arrests of school-age persons most often involve possession of marijuana, which accounts for almost 60 percent of all drug possession arrests. About 25 percent of drug possession arrests involve opium or cocaine and their derivatives, including morphine, heroin, and codeine. The remainder of drug possession arrests involve synthetic narcotics and dangerous non-narcotic drugs.